



# RURAL BROADBAND EXPANSION COUNCIL

**Minutes for Regular Meeting**  
**10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 21, 2021**  
**State Capitol, Room 206**

## **1. Welcome / Call to Order / Establish a Quorum**

- Sen. Leewright called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and ordered the roll to be called.
- Present: Mike Berube, Drew Beverage, Patrick Grace, James Leewright, Roger Neal, Logan Phillips, Sammie Valentino, Daniel Webster, and Brian Whitacre.
- Absent: Darlene Brugnoli (online), Steven Harpe, Jack Smiley, Billy Staggs, Jerry Whisenhunt (online), and Brandy Wreath.
- Chair declared that a quorum of the Council was present.

## **2. \* Approval of Minutes of the May 19 and June 16 meetings**

- Sen. Leewright asked for any additions or corrections to the minutes. There being none, he invited a motion.
- Motion #1: Mr. Webster moved to approve the minutes as presented.
- By voice vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

## **3. Remarks from Co-Chairman Sen. James Leewright**

- Reminder to all that the meeting is being recorded.
- Recapped June 22 meeting between co-chairs and Commerce staff. Sonja Wall will arrange to share CostQuest data with ODOC GIS staff. ODOC has mapped FCC Form 477 data from 2019. They will add additional layers from other data sources.
- We expect lots of federal money via ARPA for Broadband. Need to quickly develop the related grant rules and processes.
- In order to meet deadlines set by legislation, we will need quorum at all Council meetings. Special meetings may also be needed.

## **4. Remarks from Co-Chairman Rep. Logan Phillips**

- State's ARPA committee will have an Infrastructure sub-committee that will work with ORBEC.
- Drew Beverage is a new Council member, appointed by Speaker McCall to represent Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs).
- Bicameral Interim Study on State Broadband Assets belonging to ODOT, OMES, & OneNet.
- Three priorities for this Council for this summer: grant program, annual report, and mapping.

## **5. Presentation on mapping by Jim Stritzinger, Broadband Coordinator, State of South Carolina (10 minutes)**

- The South Carolina Broadband Office Mapping Methodology uses an Artificial Intelligence model to predict the level of internet access in any census block in the U.S. using a multi-factor analysis.
- Determine where to invest – high density of unserved households.

- Use current data. White-listed Ookla's speed-test app on student devices to collect more data.
- Identify and map Areas of Need.
- Training program for Broadband Community Champions – Understanding Internet Infrastructure; Eliminating Gaps in K-12 Education; and Identifying Healthcare Opportunities.
- [www.scdigitaldrive.com](http://www.scdigitaldrive.com) provides access to all public maps.
- Whitacre: What is your relationship with broadband grants in South Carolina?
- Stritzinger: My office awards broadband grants. ISPs apply to the SC Dept. of Commerce; had 82 applications; awarded \$30 million; watching RDOF to coordinate awards and avoid double dipping.
- Berube: How do incorporate shape files into your data?
- Stritzinger: Shape files can create problems when they lack sufficient engineering details. In SC, only ISPs that participate by providing data are eligible to apply for and receive grants.
- Phillips: Thanked Mr. Stritzinger for his presentation.

**6. Report of the GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES sub-committee by Ms. Jenny Dillon on behalf of Mr. Brandy Wreath (5 minutes)**

- Met June 30; recommended to purchase two of the Ookla speed-test datasets:
  - Fixed networks (higher priority)
  - Mobile networks (lower priority)
- Discussed potential MOU with South Carolina involving cost sharing to develop a map for Oklahoma. No opposition was voiced, but no vote was taken to recommend.

**7. \* Discussion and possible action on recommendations of the Geographic Boundaries sub-committee (10 minutes)**

- Phillips: Do you have the costs on those datasets?
- Dillon: The first dataset purchased is \$45,000; the second would be an additional \$38,250.
- Phillips: More info on the proposed MOU?
- Dillon: Early, but would be between SC's Broadband Office and ODOC to develop maps within months.
- Phillips: Asked for motions; seeing none, thanked Ms. Dillon for her report.

**8. Report of the ADOPTION RATE sub-committee by Dr. Brian Whitacre (5 minutes)**

- Met last Friday. Update on Emergency Broadband Benefit – slide: Percentage of Eligible Households Signing Up for EBB (July 12, 2021 data). Oklahoma still ranks in top five states, but there is variability; Tulsa has high sign-up rate, while Panhandle has very low rate.
- North Carolina's "Band NC" program provides a \$5,000 grant to each county that develops a digital inclusion plan. The sub-committee will likely recommend a similar program for Oklahoma using ARPA funds. Private parties may participate by donating devices, etc.
- Sonja Wall shared a two-page regional planning document for broadband to coordinate different funding opportunities – a Digital Ready program might be created.

**9. \* Discussion and possible action on recommendations of the Adoption Rate sub-committee (5 minutes)**

- **Motion #2:** Sen. Leewright moved to fund a \$5,000 digital inclusion grant available to counties, contingent on ARPA funds being available; Mr. Webster seconded the motion. Motion approved.
- **Phillips:** All ads I've seen promoting EBB have been on social media. Are there print ads, too?
- **Whitacre:** Cooperatives and AARP have sent mailers.
- **Leewright:** Any ideas why the disparities in EBB sign-up rates in Tulsa and Oklahoma City?
- **Whitacre:** We're looking into it. Some groups in Tulsa were promoting it.
- **Fina:** Tulsa is the most active participant in the Lifeline program, so that probably accounts for a good deal of the difference. They have better infrastructure for connecting with the eligible participants.
- **Berube:** Tulsa also has navigators, which helps facilitate sign-ups.

**10. Report of the POLICY IMPACTS sub-committee by Mr. Mike Fina on behalf of Ms. Darlene Brugnoli (5 minutes)**

- ODOC provided background on administrative efforts, action items, and deadlines to co-chairs and council. Shout out to ODOC staff for their support.
- Discussed recently passed legislation:
  - HB2040. Definition of Broadband and served, underserved, and unserved areas.
  - HB1124. Broadband deployment grant program. The Council and ODOC will promulgate rules. Probably will fund with ARPA dollars. Will consider best practices from other states.
  - ARPA activity by Governor's office and legislative committee. A Project Management Office (PMO) has been selected. Director Harpe raised many questions about broadband. The PMO has knowledge and experience in this area.
  - HB2928. Network area coverage data & speed data. ODOC using FCC Form 477 data.

**11. \* Discussion and possible action on recommendations of the Policy Impacts sub-committee (5 minutes)**

- No questions; no motions.

**12. Report of the ADVISORY sub-committee by Director Steven Harpe (5 minutes)**

- Absent; no report.

**13. \* Discussion and possible action on recommendations of the Advisory sub-committee (5 minutes)**

- Skip.

**14. \* Discussion and possible action on creating a new sub-committee for Grant Rules (10 minutes)**

- The Council will adopt rules and criteria for the broadband grants so ODOC can prepare administrative rules. The Council will submit its funding recommendations to the ARPA committee.
- **Motion #3:** Sen. Leewright moved to create a new sub-committee for Grant Rules; Ms. Valentino seconded the motion. Motion approved.
- **Motion #4:** Sen. Leewright moved for Rep. Phillips to chair the Grant Rules sub-committee; Ms. Valentino seconded the motion. Motion approved.
- **Leewright:** If members wish to serve on this sub-committee, reach out to Kirk Martin or Rep. Phillips.

**15. \* Discussion and possible action on membership of various sub-committees (10 minutes)**

- Motion #5: Dr. Whitacre moved to add Jim Reese & Robbie Squires to the **Adoption Rate** sub-committee; Mr. Neal seconded the motion. Approved without objection.
- Motion #6: Sen. Leewright moved to add Sammie Valentino & Robbie Squires to the **Geographic Boundaries** sub-committee; Mr. Webster seconded the motion. Approved without objection.
- Motion #7: Sen. Leewright moved to add Sandra Harrison & Robbie Squires to the **Policy Impacts** sub-committee; Mr. Neal seconded the motion. Approved without objection.
- Motion #8: Sen. Leewright moved to add Sammie Valentino, Jami Longacre, & Robbie Squires to the **Advisory** sub-committee; Mr. Webster seconded the motion. Approved without objection.
- Motion #9: Sen. Leewright moved to change procedure for adding people to sub-committees: no longer require a Council vote; simply notify the sub-committee chair and Kirk Martin. Seconded by Mr. Grace. Approved without objection.

**16. \* Discussion and possible action on preparing annual report (5 minutes)**

- HB4013 requires the Council to write and submit an annual report. Darlene Brugnoli has previously offered to assist in this effort.
- Motion #10: Sen. Leewright moved for Ms. Brugnoli to coordinate the effort to write the Annual Report; Mr. Neal seconded the motion. Approved without objection.
- Leewright: Not only is the annual report required by law, it is also important. I strongly encourage members to assist Ms. Brugnoli.

**17. Discussion of possible agenda items for next meeting**

- None.

**18. Announcements**

- Next regularly scheduled meeting: 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 18, 2021, in Room 4S.5, State Capitol. Members must attend in person in order to count toward quorum, speak, and vote. Others may join online or in person.
- Throughout 2021, Council meetings are set for the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m.
- Leewright: We may need to call a special meeting before the next regular meeting.
- Phillips: It is very likely.
- Leewright: Thank you to Commerce and Kirk Martin for their assistance with this Council.

**19. Adjournment**

- Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

\* Indicates anticipated action.

Prepared by: Kirk Martin, Oklahoma Department of Commerce  
Approved by Council: 09/15/2021